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## **ADVANCES CONTINUE IN EXCELA HEALTH HEART PROGRAM**

### ***New Benchmarks In Complexity of Care Thanks to Clinical Expertise, Technology***

**GREENSBURG, PA, June 3, 2022 ...** Excela Health marks another milestone in the evolution of its structural heart program as clinicians surpass 1,000 heart surgeries this month. This benchmark was reached in just three years through the clinical expertise and technology added in 2019 to deepen the complexity of care available within the health system's open-heart surgery program begun more than 25 years ago.

During this same three-year time span, Excela's cardiothoracic surgeons have been recognized by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), which ranks the health system's heart surgery program among the top 2 percent nationwide.

The honor comes in the form of a distinguished three-star rating from STS for patient care and outcomes in three separate categories: aortic valve replacement combined with coronary artery bypass grafting (AVR+CABG), isolated aortic valve replacement (AVR), and isolated coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG). Historically, less than 10 percent of all programs within the STS database achieve this elite standing.

The three-star rating denotes the highest category of clinical quality within the STS rating system, and is considered one of the most sophisticated and highly regarded

overall measures of quality in healthcare, rating the benchmarked outcomes of cardiothoracic surgery programs in the United States and Canada. The star rating is calculated using a combination of quality measures for specific procedures performed by an STS Adult Cardiac Surgery Database participant.

As the complexity of cases has expanded, so, too, has the spectrum of procedures being offered. Over the past year, Excelsa Health heart specialists have surpassed more than 100 transcatheter aortic valve replacements and 100 WATCHMAN implants to wean patients from blood thinners. Both are reflective of Excelsa Health's growth in tertiary capabilities.

These are just two of a growing list of procedures being performed in the hybrid catheterization lab at Westmoreland Hospital where Excelsa Health's Heart Center is located. This state-of-the-art hybrid suite allows interventional cardiologists, radiologists and cardiac and vascular surgeons to work together in one room to perform traditional diagnostic functions of a cardiac catheterization lab or interventional radiology suites, combined with traditional surgical functions of the operating room. Its real-time intraoperative image guidance systems provide unparalleled imaging capabilities in the operating room itself -- before, during and after the procedure. For patients, that can translate into a shorter procedure, less post-operative recovery time and less risk for complications.

Key to these varied accomplishments are cardiothoracic surgeons Hiroyuki Tsukui, MD, PhD, Michael H. Culig, MD, MMM, and Mitsugu Ogawa, MD, PhD, who joined the Excelsa Health team within the past three years. Their Excelsa Health colleagues include electrophysiologists, interventional and noninvasive cardiologists who are part of the expanding complement of physicians and advanced practice providers within the Heart, Lung and Vascular Institute.

"The mission of the Excelsa Health cardiovascular program is to provide advanced, highly sophisticated care across a wide spectrum of conditions with the highest clinical quality and the best patient experience," affirmed Dr. Culig. "Patients can have confidence that they are evaluated and treated expeditiously and followed carefully to ensure the best possible outcome based on their health needs."

Excelsa Health has been a participant in the STS national database since 2010, when the Society first began public reporting of outcomes. Excelsa's commitment to share its results in a transparent way is significant because it allows patients the opportunity to validate the clinical expertise of their community healthcare team against concrete measures for excellence. Excelsa Health has continued to enhance its program, adding clinical expertise and technology that consistently exceeds benchmarking standards for patient outcomes.